CHAPTER VII.

UNIVERSAL APOSTACY,

OR THE

SEVENTEEN CENTURIES OF DARKNESS.

PARTIAL APOSTACY OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS—ITS DREADFUL RESULTS—TOTAL APOSTACY OF THE JEWS—THE KINGDOM OF GOD TAKEN FROM THEM—UNIVERSAL APOSTACY OF THE GENTILES IN THE SECOND CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA—THE KINGDOM OF GOD TAKEN FROM THE EARTH—THE LONG NIGHT OF DARKNESS WHICH FOLLOWED—OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

1.—The great Apostacy, and consequent extinction of the Christian Church from the earth, is the subject for consideration in the present chapter. During the last seventeen centuries, thousands of millions, among the nations of Christendom, have flattered themselves with the idea that they were members of the true Christian Church: they have supposed that a true Christian organization, a Christian ministry, and the institutions and blessings of Christianity, have been perpetuated. To have called in question the continuation of the Christian Church among them, would have been considered the height of impiety, closely bordering on blasphemy. To have declared that there was a Universal Apostacy, during which every vestige of divine authority, every prominent feature of ancient Christianity, ceased among the nations, would have roused the anger of all Christendom, and brought into demand the most cruel tortures of the inquisition.

2.—It is very difficult for the great mass of mankind to free themselves from the influences of false tradition, to swerve from the old beaten track of their fathers, and to break off the yoke of religious fanaticism, rendered sacred by age and popularity. It requires an honest heart, an independent mind, and a firm reliance on Jehovah, to embrace an unpopular truth, and stand up boldly against the mighty torrent of lies and persecution which continually threaten to overwhelm and destroy. There are but very few who have integrity and moral firmness sufficient to attack the errors of ages, and expose the religions of priestcraft, falsely called Christianity.

3.—It is often the case that partial Apostacy occurs among the people of God; in such instances they may be greatly chastened, and many of the Apostates be cut off by judgment; but still they may not be wholly rejected. The difference between a *Partial* and a *Universal* Apostacy, we will endeavour to describe. A Partial Apostacy is a departure of some of the Church from the laws and institutions of heaven, while the remainder are steadfast in the same. A Universal Apostacy is the departure of the whole people from the

divine oracles, to such an extent that they entirely lose the priesthood, or the divine authority to officiate in any of the institutions or ordinances of heaven: when such is the case, the Church or kingdom of God ceases among them. When once divested of divine authority, it matters not how moral mankind may be, they cannot build up the Christian Church, and the people cannot become true Christians, however much they may desire to be such.

4.—We will now give a few examples of Partial Apostacy in the Jewish Church :—

When the people of God were encamped at the foot of mount Sinai, the Lord said unto them, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus xix. 5, 6, 8.) Three days after the people made this covenant, the Lord came down upon the mount in their sight, with thunderings, and lightnings, and with a great sound of a trumpet, and with a cloud, and fire, and thick smoke, while the whole mount trembled and shook to its very centre, under His Almighty power. With a loud voice He uttered in the ears of all Israel the "Ten Commandments." "And when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exodus xx. 18, 19.) After this, Moses drew near and received the word of the Lord, and came down and declared the same to the people. "And all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." (Exodus xxiv.)

5.—From these passages it will be seen that the people entered into two covenants with the Lord; the first of which they did not keep: they could not endure the glory of it, but fled from their position, at the foot of the mount, to which post they had been commanded to assemble; (xix. 13.) and entreated Moses that the Lord might not speak with them. This greater covenant was the covenant of the Gospel, including the ten commandments. They had already been baptized in the sea, and had drunk of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and had been overshadowed with a cloud of glory. And it was the design of the Lord to prepare them, still further, that they might be able to abide his presence: this was the grand object of the greater covenant: but they could not endure it: they fled; and earnestly prayed for something less glorious, and more adapted to their carnal natures. Here then was a partial Apostacy of the whole people, except Moses, from the higher covenant or law of the Gospel, and from the blessings appertaining to the same.

6.—The result of this Apostacy was to shut them out from the presence of the Lord, and from the blessings which Moses enjoyed. But notwithstanding this partial Apostacy, the Lord did not wholly forsake them; but concluded, that inasmuch as they had rejected the first covenant of the Gospel, He would add to it another of an inferior nature, and let them have an opportunity of obeying it, if they desired.

7.—This second covenant will be found recorded in Exodus, commencing at the twenty-second verse of the twentieth chapter, and ending with the close of the twenty-third chapter. All the words of this second covenant, Moses wrote in a book, as I have already quoted in the 4th paragraph. "And he

took the Book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." (Exodus xxiv. 7.) It should be borne in mind, that Moses wrote this Book, prior to the one which the Lord wrote on the tables of stone. Some of the laws contained in this Book were very different from the holy laws of the Gospel covenant; such as, "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (Exodus xxi. 23—25.) This "law was added because of transgression." Paul calls it a "law of carnal commandments." Because of the wickedness of Israel, God says, "I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." (Ezekiel xx. 25.) These laws and statutes were not good, but were adapted to the low carnal dispositions of a people who had rejected the higher law of the Gospel, and who would not any more hear the voice of God, nor abide his presence. By this law "no flesh could be justified;" by it none could enter into the presence of God and live. It was a yoke of bondage added because of the transgression of a superior law, including the first covenant. This was the mournful result of a partial Apostacy. But still they were not altogether cast off: the authority of the lesser priesthood and the Church still remained, though shorn of their greater glory.

8.—After this first partial Apostacy of Israel, Moses went up into the mount, and was absent forty days and nights, and God made tables of stone with his own hand, and wrote upon them many other laws, besides those which Moses had previously written. During this interval, Israel again apostatized, by making and worshipping a golden calf. Because of this sin, the Lord became exceedingly angry with Israel, and said unto Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people: now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God,and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." (Exodus xxxii. 9—14.)

9.—For this Apostacy, the Lord was upon the point of destroying the whole Israelitish Church from the face of the earth, with the exception of Moses; but through the intercession of this good man, the Church was spared; and Moses returned to them, and when he saw their wickedness, he dashed the tables of stone out of his hands, and broke them to pieces, considering the Church unworthy of the sacred things written thereon. And after having ordered about three thousand of the Apostates to be killed, he "returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold: yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will

I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." (Exodus xxxii. 31—34.) Though the Lord spared this Apostate nation, He would not forgive their sin, but said that all who had sinned should be blotted out of His book, and that their sin should be visited upon them.

10.—Through this Apostacy, another great evil befel them, namely, the withdrawal of the presence of the Lord. The Lord had accompanied them from Egypt, and was exhibited before them upon the mount; but their sin had now become so great, that He utterly refused to go with them any further. It is true, He permitted Moses still to remain among them, and also promised to send an angel with them, but withdrew His own presence. This dreadful calamity is mentioned in the following passages:—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it; and I will send an Angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: FOR I WILL NOT GO UP IN THE MIDST OF THEE; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned." (Exodus xxxiii. 1—4.)

11.—After this the Lord made a great difference between the people and Moses. When the people went into the tabernacle to worship, the cloud of glory did not appear; but "when Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses." . . "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exodus xxxiii. 9—11.) And the Lord said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto Him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." (Verses 14, 15.) Moses obtained a promise that the presence of the Lord should accompany him, and that he should enter into rest; but the others were rejected from His presence, and the Lord sware in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest; they were blotted out of the book which He had written; and the time came that their sin was visited upon them, and their carcases fell in the wilderness. This was the sad and mournful result of their Apostacy.

12.—On the first tables of stone were written some of the great principles of the Gospel, and also the law that was added to the same, "because of transgression:" but on the second tables, God would not suffer the higher law of the Gospel to be written. The second tables, therefore, contained only the ten commandments, and the inferior law that was added. For this information, we are indebted to the inspired translation of Exodus by the Prophet, Joseph Smith. As Israel broke the first covenant, so Moses broke the first tables containing the same. As they had rendered themselves unworthy of a celestial law, so God counted them unworthy to have their names enrolled in His book, or to enter into His rest. As they had forfeited all right to be accompanied by His presence, He declared His intention to withdraw from their midst, and leave them to the inferior guidance of an Angel.

13.—But this Apostacy of Israel was not Universal, so as to shut them entirely out from all divine communications and manifestations; for when

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Moses went up into the Mount the second time, "the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there;" and Moses said, "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us, for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance. And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee." (Exodus xxxiv. 5, 9, 10.) Though the Lord would not suffer His presence to go with Israel, yet He promised Moses that He would do marvelous and terrible things before Israel, such as had never before been done in all the earth. In fulfilment of this promise, the Lord wrought great wonders among them, from generation to generation, in proportion to their righteousness.

14.—While in the wilderness they often turned aside from the Lord. And after entering the promised land, Apostacy succeeded Apostacy, sometimes to that extent, that open visions and miraculous manifestations were, for a while, withheld from them; and they were delivered as captives into the hands of their enemies. At length their Apostacy became so great, that during three or four centuries before Christ, they divided themselves into a variety of contending sects. Revelations and prophecies were seldom given; miracles became more and more rare: the commandments of God were made void by the traditions of the elders; and all had Apostatized, except a few, who occasionally received visions, dreams, the ministry of angels, prophecies, and revelations: such as Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, Anna, a prophetess, Simeon, and certain shepherds. But notwithstanding this very great Apostacy, the authority of the priesthood still remained, and the Church was still in existence, among them. The Apostacy was not yet considered Universal, and the kingdom was not rent from them.

15.—Finally the time came that they rejected their Messiah, and the testimony of the Apostles, and lost all the gifts and miraculous powers enjoyed by their fathers: therefore the Lord cast them off; and all authority of a divine nature, ceased from their midst; and they became a nation of hypocrites and Apostates, unfit for anything but destruction and the damnation of hell. Jesus had foretold the calamities that awaited them, and had prophesied, saying, "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matthew xxi. 43.) In all their former Apostacies, they never became so totally corrupt as to lose the kingdom; but now their sins were so great, and their Apostacy so Universal, that God determined to take the kingdom entirely away from the nation, and give it to the Gentiles, who would, for a season, bring forth the fruits of it.

16.—To fulfil this prediction, the ministry were commanded to turn unto the Gentiles, tens of thousands of whom gladly received the kingdom of God, and became citizens thereof. The fruits of the kingdom were abundantly manifest. The Gentiles, as soon as they received it, began to have visions, dreams, prophecies, revelations, angels, tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings, miracles, and, in short, all the fruits of the kingdom that Israel enjoyed in the days of their righteousness. The miraculous fruits of the kingdom of God among the Gentiles, did not differ from the miraculous fruits of the same in the days of Moses and of the succeeding prophets of Israel. The Jews were overthrown for ceasing to bring forth these fruits, while the Gentiles received the blessing which Israel lost.

17.—After Israel lost the kingdom, they had no more power nor authority which God recognized: their priesthood which could once bless and curse with authority, became powerless. Their ministrations were as useless as those of heathen priests; their forms and ceremonies were as lifeless and ineffectual as those of Paganism. God had forsaken the nation, by withdrawing the kingdom with all its supernatural fruits; eighteen long centuries of terrible midnight darkness have rolled over the heads of that devoted Apostate race.

18.—Jesus said that the nation to whom the kingdom should be transferred would be blessed with the fruits thereof. But have these fruits continued? Has the kingdom of God remained with the Gentiles, until the present day? These are questions of infinite importance. If the Gentiles have lost the kingdom of God, as the Jews did before them, it is high time that they should be made aware of it. We shall prove in this chapter that the Gentiles did not retain the kingdom of God after the second century of the Christian era; that from that time to the present, they have had no more authority to administer Christian ordinances than the Apostate Jews; and that all their forms, and ordinances, and ministrations, are an abomination in the sight of God.

19.—The great Apostacy of the Christian Church commenced in the first century, while there were yet inspired apostles and prophets in their midst; hence Paul, just previous to his martyrdom, enumerates a great number who had "made shipwreck of their faith," and "turned aside unto vain jangling;" teaching "that the resurrection was already past," giving "heed to fables and endless genealogies," "doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof came envyings, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." This apostacy had become so general that Paul declares to Timothy, "that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;" and again, he says, "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me;" he further states, that "there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." These apostates, no doubt, pretended to be very righteous; for, says the Apostle, "they profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Near the close of the first century, the Apostacy had become so universal, that only seven churches throughout all Asia, Africa, and Europe, were considered worthy of being either reproved or blessed by the voice of revelation; and even these seven were so corrupted by the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and of Balaam, by the fornications and adulteries of Jezebel, and by losing their "first love," and becoming "neither cold nor hot," that the Almighty considered them, with a very few exceptions, as "dead," and threatened to "spue them out of his mouth"—to cast them "into great tribulation," and "kill their children with death"—to "fight against them with the sword of His mouth"—and to "remove the candlestick" or Church, "out of its place."

20.—That this apostacy, which had become so formidable, while yet inspired apostles were in their midst, was to greatly increase, instead of decreasing, is evident from the predictions of scripture. Paul prophesies that "the day of Christ shall not come, except there come a falling away first;" that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being

deceived." As a reason for the strict charge which he gave to Timothy, he predicts that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts *they shall heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." The predictions concerning the apostacy were not expressed in a vague uncertain form of language, but in the clearest and most forcible terms. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly," says Paul, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Peter prophesies that "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of; and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." (2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3.) These "fables," "doctrines of devils," and "damnable heresies," which false teachers should introduce into the world, were to constitute the religion of future ages, rendering the state of society fearful in the extreme. Paul gives a prophetic description of the religion of latter times as follows:—"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*, from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was." (2 Tim. iii. 1—9.)

21.—It seems from the foregoing predictions, that the religion of the latter-days was to be most awfully corrupt; that its teachers, instead of being sent by revelation from God, were to be heaped together by the people. These man-made teachers were to turn away the ears of the people from the truth, or from sound doctrine, and in its stead were to teach "fables," "doctrines of devils," "damnable heresies," "speaking lies in hypocrisy;" they were to come "with feigned words, or with great swelling words of vanity," to "make merchandise of the people;" they were to have "*a form* of Godliness," but "*the power*" they were to deny: they were to meet with great success in deceiving mankind; for "many were to follow their pernicious ways." The people were to delight in these powerless, devilish, hypocritical, lying, damnable heresies, while the way of truth was to be evil spoken of; and "because they received not the love of the truth," God was to "send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

22.—Such was to be the religion of the latter ages, as prophetically described by the ancient apostles; and such is the religion of the Papal, Greek, and Protestant Churches of the nineteenth century. The predictions were uttered eighteen centuries ago, and modern Christendom exhibits a most perfect fulfilment. Instead of having apostles, prophets, and other in-

spired men in the church now, receiving visions, dreams, revelations, ministrations of angels, and prophecies for the calling of officers, and for the government of the Church,—they have a wicked, corrupt, uninspired pope, or uninspired archbishops, bishops, clergymen, &c., who have a great variety of corrupt forms of Godliness, but utterly deny the gift of revelation, and every other miraculous power which always characterised Christ's Church.

23.—These man-made, powerless, hypocritical, false teachers, "make merchandise of the people," by preaching for large salaries, amounting in many instances to tens of thousands of pounds sterling annually. They and their deluded followers are reprobate concerning the faith once delivered to the Saints. The faith which once quenched the violence of fire, stopped the mouths of lions, divided waters, and controlled the powers of nature, is discarded as unnecessary. The faith that inspired men with the gift of revelation—that opened the heavens and laid hold on mysteries that were not lawful to be uttered—that unfolded the visions of the past and future—and that called down the angels of heaven to eat and drink with men on earth—is denied to be attainable in this age. The sound doctrine taught by the apostles which put mankind in the possession of these glorious gifts and powers, cannot now be endured. The doctrines, commands, fables, traditions, and creeds, of uninspired men, are now substituted in the place of direct inspiration from God. "They are ever learning, but are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Guess-work, conjecture, opinion, and, perhaps, in some instances, a belief in regard to the truth, are all that they attain to, while a knowledge they do not attain, because they deny new revelation the only means of obtaining it. This great multitude of false teachers who have found their way into all nations, deceiving millions, "resist the truth," contend against the miraculous powers of the Gospel, and reject inspired men, as "Jannes and Jambres"—the magicians, did Moses; "their folly shall be made manifest to all men, as their's also was;" yea, all nations shall see the righteous judgments which shall speedily be executed upon them, for they shall, like Pharaoh's host, perish quickly from the earth.

24.—If the revelations contained in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are the only ones to be received, it would be impossible for any man since the apostacy, to prove from those books that he was called of God. The Bible contains the record of the callings and commissions of many who lived during the first four thousand years; but it says not one word about the callings and commissions of those who have lived during the last seventeen centuries. Some who have seen the dilemma in which they are placed by rejecting new revelation, have endeavoured to extricate themselves from it, by pretending that the old commissions given to the apostles are sufficient for all present purposes. But this places them in another dilemma equally as great, for how can any man learn whether the commission given to the apostles is applicable to himself or not? Without new revelation he could never know. Surely the apostolic commission does not authorise *all* mankind who should live in future ages; and if it authorise *a part* only, then it certainly would require new revelation to specify which part. Therefore, if we were to admit so absurd an idea, there still would be an equal necessity for new revelation. But commissions or callings given to one man never did, nor never can, authorise another. Mankind have no more authority to preach, baptize, and administer the ordinances of the Gospel, by virtue of the apostolic commission,

than they have to ascend to the throne of Great Britain by virtue of the commission given to king David.

25.—As the church of England and other protestants do not profess to have received any new commission by revelation, but on the contrary, require their followers to reject everything of the kind, it may be asked, how did they get their authority? It will be replied, that they received it from Wickliffe, Cranmer, Luther, Calvin, and various other dissenters of the Papal church. But where did those dissenters get their's from? They answer, from the Roman Catholics. But the Catholics excommunicated them as heretics; and surely if they had power to impart authority, they had power to take it away. Therefore, if the Romish church had any authority, the protestants, being excommunicated, can hold none from that source. But if the Catholics hold authority, they must be the true church, and consequently the protestants must be apostates; but on the other hand, if the Catholics are not the true church, they can have no authority themselves, and therefore could not impart any to others.

26.—Now the church of England states in one of her homilies, "*that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, men and women, and children of all ages, sects, and degrees, of* WHOLE CHRISTENDOM, *have been at once buried in* THE MOST ABOMINABLE IDOLATRY, *(a most dreadful thing to think,) and that for the* SPACE OF EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS OR MORE."* Wesley in his 94th sermon states the same in substance; he says, "The real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church, was, *because the Christians were turned heathens again, and had only a dead form left.*" If then, "the whole of Christendom," without one exception, have been "buried in the most abominable idolatry for upwards of eight hundred years," as the church of England declares, and if they, because they are destitute of the gifts, are not even now Christians, but heathens, as Wesley asserts, we ask where the authority was during this eight hundred years, and where is it now? Surely God would not recognise "the most abominable idolaters," as holding authority; if so, the authority of the worshippers of Juggernaut must be as valid as that of idolatrous Christendom. But the idolatry of "the whole of Christendom" must have been more corrupt, according to the church of England, than that of other idolaters; for they call it "*the most abominable idolatry,*" and most positively declare that there was no exception of either clergy or laity—of either man, woman, or child—all were buried in it. This being the case, (and we feel no disposition to dispute it), there could have been no possible channel on the whole earth through which authority could have been transferred from the apostles to our day. Therefore, as Wesley says, all Christendom are, sure enough, "*heathens,*" having no more authority nor power than the idolatrous pagans. If, then, "the whole of Christendom" have been without authority and power, "for eight hundred years and upwards," we ask, when was the authority restored? how was it restored? and to what man or people was it restored? It could not have been restored to the Papal churches, for they do not profess that any such restoration has been made to them; it could not have been restored to the church of England and other protestants, for they do not admit of any later revelation than the New Testament; consequently their own admissions prove most clearly that the whole of Christendom are without an authorised ministry.

* Homily on the Perils of Idolatry.

27.—Who among the Saints of ancient times could have supposed that a race of people would arise professing to believe in the revelations of old time, but considering that all new ones were entirely unnecessary? The worshippers of Baal were far more consistent than apostate Christendom; for they had a faint hope that Baal would hear and answer them; but modern divines have no expectation that their God will say anything to them or to their followers. Baal's followers cried from morning until evening for him to give unto them a miraculous manifestation, in the presence of Elijah; but to even expect a supernatural manifestation or revelation now is considered, by modern religionists, as the greatest absurdity. Baal's worshippers, therefore, with all their absurdities, approached nearer the religion of heaven, in some of their expectations, than those who falsely call themselves Christians.

28.—The history of the people of God, from the earliest ages, shows that *continued revelation* was the only way that they could possibly learn all their duties or God's will concerning themselves. They never once thought that the revelations given to previous generations were sufficient to guide them into every duty. A doctrine which rejects new revelation is a new doctrine, invented by the devil and his agents during the second century after Christ; it is a doctrine in direct opposition to the one believed in and enjoyed by the Saints in all ages. Now, to subvert and do away a doctrine four thousand years old, and introduce a new one in its stead, can only be done by *divine authority*. But have the propagators of this new doctrine, at any period since its invention, established its authority either by scripture, reason, miracles, or in any other way? If not, how dare they break in upon the long-established order of God, and invent a new doctrine, excluding all further revelation? How dare they promulgate a doctrine so entirely different from what the ancient Saints ever believed or thought of? How dare they assume and teach that God will no more speak with man, when He never had failed, in any instance, to converse with His Saints in every previous generation? How dare they call themselves the people of God, and yet reject the great, fundamental, and infinitely important doctrine of *continued revelation*, which always distinguished the people of God from every other people? None but the most blind and determined enemies to new revelation could for a moment believe the Bible, and at the same time believe that the ancient Saints and the apostate churches of Christendom were both the people of God: the one class believed in a doctrine of continued revelation, established not only by several thousand years' experience, but by a continued series of miracles during that long period of time; while the other class have entirely excluded this heavenly doctrine from their midst, and, as a substitute, have invented, through the aid of uninspired men, "Articles of Religion," "Creeds," "Disciplines," "Commentaries," &c. Who then, with a knowledge of these two systems of religion, so widely different and opposed to each other, would have the hardihood or wicked presumption to call the latter Christians or the Church of God?

29.—As the doctrine, then, of continued revelation, is one that was always believed by the Saints, it ought not to be required of any man to prove the necessity of the continuation of such a doctrine. If it were a new doctrine never before introduced into the world, it would become necessary to establish its divine origin; but, inasmuch as it is an old doctrine, established thousands of years ago, and which has never ceased to be believed and enjoyed by the Saints, it would be the greatest presumption to call it in

question at this late period; and hence it would seem almost superfluous to undertake to prove the necessity of its continuance. Instead of being required to do this, all people have the right to call upon all the new-revelation deniers of the last seventeen centuries to bring forward their strong reasonings and testimonies for breaking in upon the long-established order of heaven, and introducing a new doctrine so entirely different from the old. If they wish their new doctrine to be believed, let them demonstrate it to be of divine origin, or else all people will be justified in rejecting it, and in still cleaving to the old. When Jesus came and did away the old law of Moses, and introduced a new system of religion, he established the divine origin of the new by the most incontrovertible testimony; the most splendid miracles were wrought both by himself and his followers. Now, if the new-revelation deniers will bring as much testimony as Jesus and his followers did, to establish their new doctrine, then they may, with some little propriety, call upon mankind to believe in it; but as yet they have given the world no evidence whatever, only their own conjectures. We are called upon to reject a doctrine much older than the law of Moses, and of far greater importance, and to receive in its stead the doctrines of uninspired men, excluding all new communications from heaven; and as yet not one testimony has been offered to the world in confirmation of this newly-invented religion. How strange that any one should ever have been deceived with such absurdities! How incomprehensibly more strange that millions should still cling to the awful delusion!

30.—When a doctrine has been originated by divine authority, and has been believed and enjoyed by the people of God, without an exception, in all ages, it is not unreasonable to expect the continuance of such doctrine among the Saints in all future ages, unless some cause can be shown for its discontinuance: for instance, the doctrine of *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *Remission of sins*, was originated and taught by divine authority immediately after the fall, and, like the doctrine of continual revelation, was embraced and enjoyed by every people of God until the apostles fell asleep. Now, if a people had arisen in the second century of the Christian era who excluded from their religion any of these principles, would not such a newly-invented religion have been considered a gross imposition, and all its originators the basest impostors? At least, would not the inventors of such a religion have been required to show some authority or cause for thus discontinuing a doctrine which even they themselves continued to admit was necessary in all previous ages? If Faith, Repentance, Remission of sins, and Continued Revelation, were necessary for four thousand years, what reason can be shown that any one of these heavenly principles should ever afterwards become unnecessary? If the second century were chosen as the memorable period for the discontinuance of an essential and long-established principle of religion, and for the introduction of a new religion different from what the people of God ever before enjoyed, then, indeed, it must be a period of great importance in the history of man. But the great and infinitely important question is, how shall mankind know that this sudden and unexpected change in the religion of heaven was produced by divine authority? Have its propagators ever established its divine authenticity in any way? If not, then they must be the vilest and most dangerous impostors that ever disgraced our earth, deceiving, not a few only, but thousands of millions, and corrupting all nations with their abominable and soul-destroying apostacy.

31.—A doctrine or principle established by divine authority will require divine authority to do it away. That which is established by a Superior Power cannot be abolished by an inferior power. This may be beautifully illustrated by the kingdoms, governments, and powers of the earth. Each has its law-making department; this power is sometimes vested in a legislative body, and sometimes in the king, queen, or emperor. Whenever any of these departments enacts laws for the welfare of the people, they are considered to be in force and binding upon all citizens until the law-making department shall repeal them, and notify the people of such repeal. Private citizens or inferior counsels could never repeal that which was enacted and ordained by higher powers. If the king ordained the law, then none but the king can repeal it. If the people should undertake to abrogate or do away the law, it would be considered an act of rebellion against the government. So if the king should ordain certain rights and privileges to be enjoyed by his subjects, no inferior power would have a right to disannul such legal grants—none would have a right to say that the privileges, ordained by the king in behalf of his subjects were done away. The power that ordains rights and privileges, can alone disannul them. The subjects have no right to suppose that any law or privilege is done away, unless the law-making department has notified the people to that effect. So it is with the kingdom of God. God is the King; He is the legal Law-Giver to all the children of the kingdom; He has ordained certain rights and privileges to be enjoyed by them all; He has given to them all the right of petition, with a sure and certain promise that He will hear and answer. These rights and privileges were enjoyed for about four thousand years by all the subjects of His government; they petitioned the King to show them by revelation many great and glorious things, which He, according to His promise, granted. Among the promised rights and blessings, granted by the great and unchangeable Law-giver, may be enumerated the privilege of conversing with Him and with His angels, and to receive knowledge by visions, by dreams, by the revelations of the Holy Spirit, and by prophecy. After having enjoyed those chartered rights for many thousand years, the people all at once assumed the authority to disannul them, and thus came out in open rebellion against the government of the Almighty. Oh, what a fearful responsibility rests upon those who have thus dared to repeal and disannul that which God had established!

32.—What would be the consequences, if a portion of the inhabitants of Great Britain were to rise up against some of the dearest and most precious rights which have been granted by the law-making department, and which have been enjoyed by the subjects for many generations? Would they not be considered to be in a state of rebellion? Would they not be taken and tried before the proper tribunals, and condemned and punished as guilty of treason? How much sorer punishment, then, must the world of Christendom receive! For their crime is of much greater magnitude. They have not rebelled against the governments of the earth, but against the government of Heaven; they have repealed, disannulled, and rebelled against some of the most sacred rights granted by the King of kings. If such a rebellion against the laws of earthly governments will subject the person to death, what must be the punishment of those who rebel against heavenly governments! Oh, Christendom! what hast thou done? Thou hast closed the door of Heaven upon thyself, and upon the nations of the earth! Thou hast made the windows of Heaven as brass that cannot easily be penetrated! Thou hast rejected the

key of revelation, and thus cut off all communication with the heavenly worlds! Thou hast repealed and made void the chartered privileges, and most sacred rights, ordained of God, for the comforting, teaching, and perfecting of His Saints! Thou hast veiled the heavens in darkness, and shrouded the earth with the black mantle of error! Oh, Christendom, what wilt thou do! And whither wilt thou hide thyself in the day of thy visitation—in the day of the fierce anger of the Almighty! The mountains and rocks will not cover thy shame, nor hide thy guilt from the eye of Him who searcheth all things! Repent, then, of thy great wickedness, oh, thou destroyer of souls! no longer lift thy voice against the glorious gift of revelation; no longer deny the chartered rights of the people of God; no longer rebel against the ministry of angels, and the enjoyment of the gifts of vision and prophecy; no longer seek to repeal that which heaven has ordained, and which the children of God enjoyed four thousand years. Remember that divine gifts and divine laws can only be repealed by divine authority.

33.—We are told by the ministers of Christendom, that God has repealed the gift of revelation, as no longer necessary. But they have utterly failed up to this day to point out the revelation that contains this repeal. The Old Testament does not contain it—the New Testament does not contain it. As the repeal act is not found in the Bible, where shall it be found? This is a question of great importance! If there be such an *Act of Repeal*, it must be somewhere, or how could these ministers have known it? We call upon Christendom to bring forward out of their sacred archives the REPEAL LAW. Let us search it—let us see what God has said about the world's having revelation enough. Let us see what time the repeal was passed, when it came in force—how long it is to continue in force—and whether there is any probability of a restoration of the former privileges! None can consider this call for the repeal law unreasonable. If God has ordained such a law it is reasonable that we should know it. The ministers say they know it. Why not let the people see the law that they may know it also? Why keep them in the dark?—if such a law exist, bring it forward. You cannot say that it is a law of not much importance; for surely, if God has passed a law repealing the gift of revelation—the gift of prophecy—the gift of visions and dreams by the spirit—the ministry of angels—and all other miraculous gifts, which had been enjoyed by every people of God among all nations, and in all generations for four thousand years—if He has swept away all these long-established and most glorious privileges from the Church by a repeal law, then it must be one of the most important laws that have ever been communicated to man; it is a law that every one should be familiar with; and none should be prohibited from reading or perusing it.

34.—When God repealed the law of Moses, He did not keep the fact to Himself, but He told the people plainly, not only of the *repeal act*, but also of the *new acts* which were introduced in its stead. The law of Moses required a man to give a writing of divorcement if he wished to put away his wife; but Jesus repealed that law, and gave a new one in its stead. The law of Moses required the people to "perform unto the Lord their oaths;" but Jesus repealed this law, and commanded the people to "swear not at all." The law of Moses required "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth;" but Jesus repealed this law also, and commanded the people "not to resist evil." Here, then, we have the repeal law, abolishing that of Moses, and the new law introduced in its stead: both are revealed in perfect plainness: there is no

dubiety or uncertainty, either as to what is repealed or as to what is substituted. If it be considered necessary to reveal to mankind that certain privileges, granted by the law of Moses, were repealed; how much more necessary is it, that mankind should know of the repeal of the blessings and privileges far greater and vastly superior to those of the law of Moses! Would God take such particular care to notify man of the repeal of Moses' law, and yet leave him in entire ignorance with regard to the repeal of the gift of revelation, visions, prophecy, &c? The law of Moses "was added because of transgression," and given "because of the hardness of their hearts;" Paul calls it a "law of carnal commandments;" therefore mankind could, with propriety, look for its repeal. But no one for a moment could have supposed that the Lord would repeal and do away such great and glorious gifts as ministers now declare to be unnecessary. But what seems still more strange, is, that he should repeal privileges, granted, not only in the Mosaic dispensation, and in the ages preceding it, but also in the Gospel dispensation, even down to the close of the first century, and yet give us no information of such repeal.

35.—But the ministers of apostate Christendom assert that God has repealed those precious gifts, and we now call upon them to tell us how they know it. Has God revealed it to them? No, say they; God reveals nothing in this age. Did you learn it from ancient revelation? If so, we call upon you in the name of the Lord, as you value your own soul's salvation, and that of others, to show us the revelation, that we may know it also. If you do not do this, it will be considered that you do not know any such thing, but that you have come to the people, like the prophets of Ahab, with a lie in your mouths to deceive, devour, and destroy. O ye ministers of modern Christendom—ye enemies of new revelation! how can ye escape the damnation of hell! How many millions of good, honest-hearted people you have deceived by your cunning craftiness, and lying hypocrisy! How many millions would have called upon God, in faith, for revelations, prophecies, visions, and the ministry of angels, and received these precious blessings, had it not been for the wicked, most abominable, and soul-destroying lies which you have instilled into their minds by telling them that these things were repealed and done away.

36.—However painful the reflection, there is nothing more certain, than that Apostacy, with all its train of horrors, has been indelibly stamped upon all the Catholic, Greek, and Protestant churches of the last seventeen centuries. Apostacy drove the Christian Church from earth to heaven, with all her authority and powers. Universal Apostacy alone was left, to curse all nations with its hypocritical and unauthorized pretentious.

37.—We shall now proceed to answer some objections urged against a Universal Apostacy:—

First, it is objected, that the promise of the Saviour, recorded in Matthew xxviii. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, could not be fulfilled unless the Church should continue its existence on the earth. These passages read thus:—"Then the eleven disciples went away into Gallilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" It is

argued by the Catholics, "that the Apostles themselves were only to live the ordinary term of man's life; therefore, the commission of preaching and ministering, together, with the promise of the divine assistance, regards the successors of the apostles, no less than the apostles themselves. This proves that there must have been an uninterrupted series of such successors of the apostles, in every age since their time; that is to say, successors to their *doctrine*, to their *jurisdiction*, to their *orders*, and to their *mission*. Hence it follows, that no religious society whatever, which cannot trace its succession in these four points, up to the apostles, has any claim to the characteristic title, APOSTOLICAL." This argument I have given in the words of one of their learned bishops, the Right Reverend Doctor Milner.* Now if it were admitted, that this *commission* and *promise* of our Saviour were intended for the successors of the apostles, (which we by no means admit,) it would still be out of the power of the Catholic priests to claim the commission and promise until they could prove from scripture and tradition, which they say is their only rule of faith, that each one of them were the actual persons who were to be the true successors: but this, they cannot do. Therefore, they have no more claim to the commission and promise than the Pagan priests have.

38.—But we do not admit that the promise—"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD," had any reference to any persons whatever only the ELEVEN disciples mentioned in the sixteenth verse, who had, by a previous engagement, retired to a mountain in Galilee: they were the only persons whom he addressed and to whom he made this great promise. But, says Doctor Milner, "*They were only to live the ordinary term of man's life,*" and consequently, he draws the conclusion that the promise could not be fulfilled to them without successors. According to this curious inference of the learned bishop, the Lord must have forsaken the *eleven* disciples as soon as they died; for if he admit that Jesus continued with them after the period of the death of their mortal bodies, and that he will continue with them even unto the end of the world, then what need would there be of successors in order that the promise might be fulfilled? Prove that Jesus has not been with the *eleven* apostles from the time of their death until the present time, and that he will not be with them "even unto the end of the world," and after you have proved this, you will prove that Jesus has falsified his word; for to be with the successors of the apostles is not to be with them. But whether the apostles have successors or not, Jesus will always be with them, and will bring them with him when he shall appear in his glory, and they shall sit upon thrones and judge the house of Israel, during the great Millennium, while Jesus will not only be with them, but will reign with them even unto the end of the world. Therefore, there is nothing in this promise of Jesus that gives the most distant intimation that an apostolic succession or Church of Christ should continue on the earth.

39.—Secondly, it is objected, that if the Church of Christ has not continued, then the gates of hell must have prevailed against her; and they refer us to that cheering passage in Matthew, (xvi. 18,) which reads thus: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." They argue, that if the Church has ceased to exist, the gates of hell have prevailed

* "End of Controversy," Letter xxviii. p. 281.

over her, and the promise of Jesus must be falsified. But we would inform the Catholics, that the Church of Christ has not ceased to exist, neither has Peter ceased his existence, but both the Church and Peter are in heaven, far out of the reach of the gates of hell, and far out of the reach of the abominable soul-destroying impositions of Popery. The gates of hell have prevailed and will continue to prevail over the Catholic Mother of Harlots, and over all her Protestant Daughters; but as for the apostolic Church of Christ, she rests secure in the mansions of eternal happiness, where she will remain until the apostate Catholic church, with all her popes and bishops, together with all her Harlot Daughters shall be hurled down to hell: then it shall be said, "Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her;" and then shall be "heard a great voice of people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand." And again they shall say, "Alleluia," and her smoke shall rise up for ever and ever. And thus when the Catholics and Protestants hear all the heavens, and all the holy apostles and prophets, rejoicing over the downfall of Babylon, they will learn that the Church of Christ still exists in heaven, and that the gates of hell have not prevailed against her; then they will learn where the apostolical and prophetical power rests; then they will perceive the difference between the glory of the Church of Christ and the misery and wretchedness of their own fiery torments.

40.—In the preceding chapters we have clearly set forth the first principles of the Gospel, as it was anciently taught, namely, its commands, its ordinances, and its blessings. We have pointed out the ancient organization of the kingdom of God: we have enumerated the miraculous gifts and powers, promised to the Saints: we have shown the ancient pattern of Christianity. While in this chapter we have dwelt upon the great and Universal Apostacy, and the consequent extinction of the Christian Church from the earth: we have exhibited the main features of this Apostacy, as it has existed, during the last seventeen centuries: we have shown how clearly the Apostles predicted the same, and how perfectly their predictions have been fulfilled.

41.—And now, dear reader, have you carefully read the foregoing chapters? Have you appealed to the Bible for information upon all these important points? Have you compared the foundation upon which you are built with the words of Jesus and his Apostles? Have you called earnestly upon the Lord to enlighten you? If you have done all these things, then you cannot but be convinced, that what we have written is the eternal truth of heaven. You cannot but perceive, that the whole earth has been under the dominion of gross darkness and Apostacy for many centuries past—that Christianity has ceased—that ages ago, the kingdom of God was taken from the Apostate Gentiles, even as it was previously taken from the wicked Jews. Under these dreadful circumstances, the nations have groaned out a miserable existence, under the dominion of priestcraft and the iron hand of tyranny.

42.—But, dear reader, do not be discouraged; do not despair. The prophets and apostles have clearly spoken of a time, when light should again burst forth from the heavens; when the Latter-day Kingdom should be set up, never more to be destroyed; when all other kingdoms should be utterly abolished, and wickedness have no more place among men for a thousand years.